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Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Summary

By draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28, the General Assembly would decide that the activities under the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict be supported through regular budgetary funding.

The requirements for implementing the current mandate of the Office of the Special Representative for the biennium 2004-2005 would amount to $6,053,700 (gross). It is estimated on this basis that the current remaining balance of extrabudgetary resources available for the Office would allow financing the current operation through July 2004.

However, it is expected that the report of the Secretary-General on a comprehensive assessment of the scope and effectiveness of the United Nations system response to the issue of children affected by armed conflict, including recommendations for strengthening, mainstreaming, integrating and sustaining these activities, requested in part V of General Assembly resolution 57/190 of 18 December 2002, will be submitted in spring 2004. Given the potential for changes in the scope of the programme of work and the mode of operation of the Office of the Special Representative resulting from the comprehensive assessment, it is recommended that the issue of regular budgetary funding for the Office be further reviewed by the Fifth Committee at its resumed fifty-eighth session.

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I. Introduction

1. At its 59th meeting, on 28 November 2003, the Third Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28, as orally revised, by a recorded vote of 106 to 21, with 29 abstentions. A statement of programme budget implications of the draft resolution (A/C.3/58/L.84) was submitted to the Committee.

2. In that statement, the attention of the Third Committee was drawn to section VI of General Assembly resolution 45/248 B of 21 December 1990, in which the Assembly reaffirmed that the Fifth Committee was the appropriate Main Committee of the Assembly entrusted with responsibilities for administrative and budgetary matters and reaffirmed also the role of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. It was stated that the matter at hand fell outside the competence of the Third Committee and should be referred to the Fifth Committee for appropriate consideration.

II. Requests contained in the draft resolution and procedures for administrative and budgetary matters

3. Under the operative paragraph of draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28, as orally revised, the General Assembly would decide that the activities under the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict be supported through regular budgetary funding.

III. Background

4. In its resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, the General Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children. The Assembly also called upon States and institutions concerned to provide voluntary contributions in support of the work of the Special Representative. The Secretary-General appointed the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in September 1997. The scope of responsibilities of the Special Representative was described in documents A/51/306 and Add.1.

5. In part IV of its resolution 52/107 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly: (a) welcomed the appointment of the Special Representative; (b) recommended that the Secretary-General ensure that the necessary support was made available to the Special Representative for the effective performance of his mandate; (c) encouraged the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide support to the Special Representative; and (d) called upon States and other institutions to provide voluntary contributions for that purpose.

6. In part III of its resolution 54/149 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years. In part V of its resolution 57/190 of 18 December 2002, the Assembly recommended that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative for a further period of three years.

7. On 6 January 1998, the Secretary-General established the Trust Fund for Children and Armed Conflict. As start-up contributions to the Trust Fund, UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees provided $100,000 and $50,000, respectively. Since its inception, the Office of the Special Representative has been financed entirely by voluntary contributions.

IV. Current financial situation

8. As of the end of November 2003, the balance of extrabudgetary resources for Children and Armed Conflict activities amounts to some $2,123,000, which may allow financing the current operation of the Office of the Special Representative approximately through July 2004.

V. Activities by which the proposed requests would be implemented

9. The objectives and activities of the Office of the Special Representative as well as related recommendations for future periods are described in the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session and to the Security Council (A/58/546-S/2003/1053).

VI. Administrative and financial arrangements and indication of additional requirements

10. Based on the actual number and level of the staff of the Office for the last three years and on the related pattern of non-post expenditures, it is estimated that the requirements of the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, in order for it to continue the same scope and nature of programme of activities as at present, would amount to $6,053,700 for the biennium 2004-2005.

11. It is recalled that by part V of its resolution 57/190, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the scope and effectiveness of the United Nations system response to the issue of children affected by armed conflict, including recommendations for strengthening, mainstreaming, integrating and sustaining these activities, and to submit his report for consideration at its fifty-eighth session. It is anticipated that the report will be submitted in spring 2004. In view of the potential impact on the programme of work and the mode of operation of the Office of the Special Representative resulting from the comprehensive assessment, it would be prudent for the Assembly to consider further the issue of regular budgetary funding emanating from draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28 in the context of its deliberation of the forthcoming related report of the Secretary-General, in spring 2004.

12. Based on the current financial situation, as indicated in paragraph 8 above, the deferral of the consideration of the funding requirements is not expected at this stage to have an adverse impact on the implementation of the activities of the Office of the Special Representative.

VII. Summary

13. **Pending the completion of the comprehensive assessment of the United Nations system response to the issue of children affected by armed conflict, it is recommended that any funding action consequent upon draft resolution A/C.3/58/L.28 be deferred and considered further by the General Assembly at its resumed fifty-eighth session in spring 2004 in the context of its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, requested by the Assembly in part V of its resolution 57/190.**